

CHAPTER NO. 636

SENATE BILL NO. 2932

By Kyle, Kilby, Kurita, Finney

Substituted for: House Bill No. 2623

By McMillan

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 55, Chapter 8, Part 1 and Title 67, relative to fuel efficient vehicles.

WHEREAS, it is the sense of Congress, as stated in the federal "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users" or "SAFETEA-LU", that the States should provide incentives (including the use of high occupancy vehicle lanes on State and Interstate highways) for the purchase and use of hybrid and other fuel efficient vehicles, which have been proven to minimize air emissions and decrease consumption of fossil fuels; and

WHEREAS, "SAFETEA-LU" enhances and clarifies provisions governing the use and operation of high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes and provides that States may provide optional exemptions for low-emission and energy-efficient vehicles to allow said vehicles with fewer than two (2) occupants to operate in HOV lanes if the vehicle is properly labeled and certified. "SAFETEA-LU" further provides that States are required to monitor, assess, and report on the operation of the HOV facility to ensure that it does not become seriously degraded by such use of optional exemptions for low-emission and energy-efficient vehicles; and

WHEREAS, the increased use of low-emission and energy-efficient vehicles, such as alternative fuel vehicles operating on alcohol fuel (methanol, denatured ethanol, or other alcohols), or a mixture of alcohol fuel and regular unleaded gasoline, or natural gas, or liquefied petroleum gas, or fuels derived from biological materials, or hydrogen, or electricity, or any fuel that would yield substantial energy security and environmental benefits, will provide greater diversity in Tennessee's energy supplies, and help reduce dependence on imported oil; and

WHEREAS, the increased use of low-emission and energy-efficient vehicles and biofuels and the local production of biofuels using domestic crops and other raw materials as feedstock will benefit Tennessee's rural communities and agricultural economy; and

WHEREAS, air pollutants from vehicles and other mobile sources have a significant impact on air quality in Tennessee, and the use of low-emission and energy-efficient vehicles and alternative fuels can help reduce vehicle emissions; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee should promote the efficient use of natural resources to protect and enhance the state's environment, economy, and health of its citizens. Therefore, it is the intent of the general assembly to study the proper implementation of a policy exempting low-emission and energy-efficient vehicles from the requirements of the HOV lanes as provided by the federal "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users" and implementing federal regulations; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. The Tennessee Department of Transportation is urged to study the proper implementation of a policy exempting low-emission and energy-efficient vehicles from the requirements of the HOV lane as provided by the federal "Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users" and implementing federal regulations. The Tennessee Department of Transportation is urged to consult with the Federal Highway Administration regarding the proper implementation of a policy exempting low-emission and energy-efficient vehicles from the requirements of the HOV lane. The Tennessee Department of Transportation is urged to report its findings and any recommendations relative to such study to the Transportation Committee of the House of Representatives and Transportation Committee of the Senate during the One Hundred Fifth General Assembly of the State of Tennessee.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.

PASSED: May 1, 2006


JOHN S. WILDER
SPEAKER OF THE SENATE


JIMMY NAIFEH, SPEAKER
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROVED this 12th day of May 2006


PHIL BREDESEN, GOVERNOR